Viburnum (2), *Nauclea* (1), *Adina* (2), *Uncaria* (1), *Wendlandia* (1), *Greena* (2), *Argostemma* (6), and *Hedyotis* (9). *Argostemma* is a genus of herbs with graceful, white flowers, quite striking when massed together, as they often are in nature. Most of the other genera have rather inconspicuous flowers.

In the same number of the Kew Bulletin (No. 4 of 1931) a new species of smut, *Sphacelotheca Sclerachnes*, is described from a Bangkok grass by Miss Wakefield.

Additamentum XXXI continues the description of new species belonging to the family Rubiaceae, with 6 species of *Hedyotis* and 3 of *Chasalia*.

With the exception of a few, where Miss Geddes is the author, all the species in the above lists are described by Professor Craib.

A. K.

Les Nids d'Hirondelles: Les Salanganes et leurs nids comestibles. By Dr. A. Sallet. Pp. 77, 12 plates, 2 maps. Imprimerie d'Extreme Orient, Hanoi. N. D.

The information in this work, dealing with edible nests and the birds which build them, is chiefly concerned with their occurrence in French Indo-China, but something is also said about their habitats in Java.

One of the illustrations is taken from a design on a bronze vessel, the 7th dynastic urn, in the Imperial Palace at Hué and represents a cave with nests and birds. Most of the other plates are of scenes on the Culao-Cham, a group of islands off the coast of Annam, an important centre for the collection of these nests.

The work is divided into 14 sections, the headings of which give a fair idea of its scope. These headings are :—1. The Bird. 2. The Nest. 3. Habitat and Geographical Distribution. 4. The Nests in Indo-China. 5. Exploitation of Nests. 6. Collection of Nests. 7. Varieties of Nests. 8. Value. 9. Frauds. 10. Esteem of the nests in the Orient. 11. Culinary uses. 12. The Nests in the Therapeutics of the Far East. 13. Ceremonies at the time of collection. 14. Folklore.

The author quotes very freely from other writers, ancient and modern, occidental and oriental. It is evident that he has done a great deal of research in the literature of the subject; though he apparently has not seen the paper by Dunlap, 'Edible Birds Nest Islands of Siam' (J. S. S., Vol. IV, pt. 3, p. 1). He has also visited some of the caves where nests are collected.

Delacour and Labouille are quoted as having identified the swifts making edible nests in Indo-China as *Collocalia francica germaini* Oust. With regard to this country: Robinson and Kloss, Journal N. H. S. S., Vol. V, p. 144, record this species from Kaw Samui and Kaw Pa-ngan in the Bay of Bandawn, but make no remarks about its nesting. In 'Birds of the Malay Peninsula', Vol. I, p. 128,

Robinson gives *Collocalia innominata* as the species building edible nests in the caves of Belitong, an islet off Terutao. Further research on these birds in Siam seems desirable.

Dr. Sallet gives the popular name of the bird along the coast of Annam as "chim én", which may have some connection with the Siamese name "ên" (แอ่น), applied to these and other swifts, as well as swallows.

The nests are made in caves and rock clefts, usually close to the sea coast, but occasionally some way inland, as, for instance, at a site near the middle of the island of Java. In this connection, attention might be drawn to McCarthy's report that people collect nests of edible swallows in a cave through which flows the Nam Ngun, a tributary of the left bank of the Mekong, in the Wieng Chan region (J. McCarthy. *Surveying and Exploring in Siam*, p. 185). It is stated that two eggs are laid, more rarely three, and that the whole incubation falls on the female. The nests are usually collected ten days after the laying, the collectors eating the eggs. Offerings are made to the "Goddess of the South Seas", or the presiding spirit of the place, before the collection begins. The author touches on the perils attendant on collecting the nests, fatal accidents to the collectors being not infrequent, as in this country.

As in Siam, three collections are made, after which the birds are allowed to build in peace. The building of the first nest takes about 70 days, of the second and third about 40. The quality of the nest is chiefly dependant on whether it is of the 1st, 2nd or 3rd, collection: the first collection being the best and the third the poorest. These qualities are again subdivided into a number of others, which can be distinguished by experts. Even the nests from two adjoining caves may be rated differently. Whole nests, as sold in the market, are usually without any adulteration, but the poorer qualities, consisting of fragments of nests, have often prepared seaweeds or other substances added.

Besides for their culinary uses, the Chinese esteem the nests for their therapeutic properties and as an aphrodisiac. They are used in the treatment of phthisis and pulmonary complaints, for which purposes a red coloured variety is most in demand.

As a minor criticism it may be noted that, in the map at the end of the work, Bangkok is represented as occupying the position of Rayawng, and Vientiane of Chiengkan. Those interested in the subject will find, gathered together in this volume, much interesting information not easily obtainable elsewhere.

A. K.

Descriptions of New Genera and Species of Siamese Fishes. By Hugh M. Smith. No. 2873.—From the Proceeedings of the United States National Museum. Vol. 79, Art. 7, pp. 1–48.